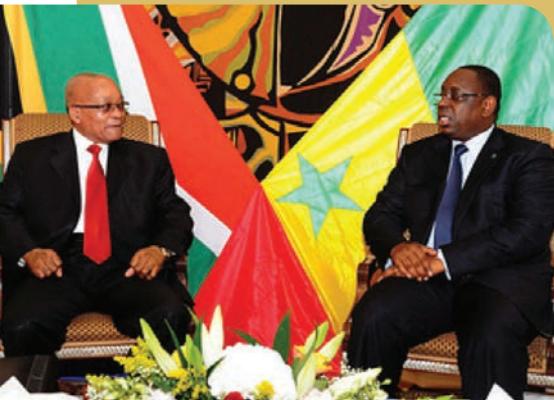


International Relations



In 2014 and beyond, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) will lead a coordinated campaign, through the footprint it has established, to diversify and consolidate South Africa's international relations.

The department is committed to promoting South Africa's national interests and values, the African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all.

The department's strategic objectives are to:

- protect and promote South African national interests and values through bilateral and multilateral interactions
- conduct and coordinate South Africa's international relations and promote its foreign policy objectives
- monitor international developments and advise government on foreign policy and related domestic matters
- protect South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity
- contribute to the formulation of international law and enhance respect for its provisions
- promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system
- maintain a modern, effective department driven to pursue excellence
- provide consular services to South African nationals abroad
- provide a world-class and uniquely South African state protocol service.

Legislation

The DIRCO derives its mandate from the following legislation:

- The Foreign States Immunities Act, 1981 (Act 87 of 1981), regulates the extent of the immunity of foreign states from the jurisdiction of the South African courts and provides for matters connected therewith.
- The Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act, 2001 (Act 37 of 2001), provides for the immunities and privileges of diplomatic missions and consular posts and their members, heads of state, special envoys and certain representatives of the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies, and other international organisations and certain people.
- The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund Act, 2001 (Act 51 of 2001), establishes an African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund to enhance cooperation between South Africa and other countries, in particular African countries, through the promotion of democracy, good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflict, socio-economic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development.

- International agreements (multilateral and bilateral): International agreements concluded by the Republic of South Africa in terms of sections 231(2) and 231(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

Budget and funding

DIRCO received R5 540 million for the 2013/14 financial year.

Foreign policy

By prioritising the African continent and promoting its renewal, development and reconstruction, South Africa is contributing to building a better Africa, which is the central foreign policy goal of the South African Government.

The country has come a long way with its partners the world over. Within 20 years, South Africa went from being a pariah state to a great nation with a visionary foreign policy that promotes relations with other countries.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

A primary goal of South Africa's policy on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control includes reinforcing and promoting the country as a responsible producer, possessor and trader of defence-related products and advanced technologies. In this regard, the department continues to promote the benefits that disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control hold for international peace and security, particularly to countries in Africa.

Regarding conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, South Africa actively participates in UN efforts related to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention, the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and efforts aimed at establishing an arms trade treaty.

Role players

South Africa has key partnerships such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Africa's comprehensive partnership with India, and the Korea-Africa Forum. South Africa's Government spares no effort in strengthening the progressive forums of the South such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G77+China, Africa-South America Summit and the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP). These forums have demonstrated that they are trusted allies and partners in South Africa's aim for a better world and Africa.

African Union (AU)

The AU emerged from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was established in 1963 with a charter signed by 32 countries in Addis Ababa. The OAU, which was officially disbanded in July 2002, was replaced by the AU with 51 members who pledged to work for closer political integration and unity among African countries.

The series of events lined up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the formation of the OAU provided a platform to promote social cohesion, build a common identity and a sense of belonging for all people of the continent.

The activities aligned to Africa Day celebrations in May 2013 included the Scramble for Africa Conference, which deliberated on matters affecting the continent.

President Jacob Zuma unveiled an artwork as South Africa's cultural contribution to the 50th anniversary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In 2013, the Department of Arts and Culture, City of Tshwane and the Africa Institute of South Africa celebrated the 50th anniversary of the OAU under the theme "2013, Year of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance".

The anniversary facilitated and celebrated African narratives of past, present and future that promote a Pan-Africanist spirit. It enthused and energised South Africans to see themselves as part of an African movement for change. It also enabled South Africans to acknowledge the role of the OAU in bringing an end to apartheid.

The AU, which now has 54 member states, brought together the continent of Africa to address its challenges collectively, such as armed conflict, social upheaval, climate change, and poverty.

It seeks to promote an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa that is people centred and represents a dynamic force on the world stage.

Africa Day reflected the key lessons of the past 50 years and acknowledged the contributions of founders of the OAU and Pan-Africanism in all countries, regions and the African diaspora.

AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC)

South Africa plays an important role in efforts to bring about peace and stability on the continent.

The AUPSC is the organ of the AU in charge of enforcing union decisions. Members are elected by the AU Assembly to reflect regional balance within Africa, as well as a variety of other criteria,

South Africa hosted the 23rd World Economic Forum in May 2013, under the theme "Delivering on Africa's Promise." The forum reflected on a broad range of economic issues relating to the African continent, converging particularly on the issues of growth and development.

including capacity to contribute militarily and financially to the union, political will to do so, and effective diplomatic presence at Addis Ababa.

The AUPSC entered into force in December 2003, after being ratified by the required majority of AU member states. It is made up of 15 member states and is responsible for the resolution of conflict, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) in conjunction with the UN.

South Africa ended its term in the AUPSC on 1 April 2012 in line with the principle of rotation among members of the southern region.

On relinquishing its seat in the council, South Africa emphasised its commitment to continue contributing to the resolution of peace and security challenges in Africa.

AU regional economic communities (RECs)

The AU is the principal institution responsible for promoting sustainable development at economic, social and cultural level, as well as integrating African economies.

RECs are recognised as the building blocks of the AU, necessitating the need for their close involvement in formulating and implementing all AU programmes.

To this end, the AU must coordinate and take decisions on policies in areas of common interest to member states, as well as coordinate and harmonise policies between existing and future RECs, for the gradual attainment of the AU's objectives.

Seven specialised technical committees are responsible for the actual implementation of the continental socio-economic integration process, together with the Permanent Representatives Committee.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad)

Nepad, an AU strategic framework for pan-African socio-economic development, is both a vision and a policy framework for Africa in the 21st century. Nepad provides unique opportunities for African countries to take full control of their development agenda, to work more closely together, and to cooperate more effectively with international partners.

Nepad manages a number of programmes and projects in six theme areas namely:

- agriculture and food security
- climate change and national resource management
- regional integration and infrastructure
- human development
- economic and corporate governance

• cross-cutting issues, including gender, capacity development and information and communication technology (ICT).

South Africa, as one of the initiating countries, played a key role in the establishment of Nepad and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and hosts the Nepad Agency and APRM Secretariat in Midrand, Gauteng.

The peer-review process is aimed at addressing corruption, poor governance and inefficient delivery of public goods and services to the citizens of African countries. It encourages the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and continental economic integration through the sharing of experiences and best practices, and is important to the sustainability of Nepad.

Nepad remains the main programme of reference for intra-African socio-economic and developmental relations and Africa's partnerships with international partners such as the EU-AU Strategic Partnership, Forum for Africa-China Partnership, the Group of Seven Most Industrialised Nations plus Russia (G8), the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the NAASP and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Through Nepad, Africa has expanded its development priorities. Development and funding in agriculture, ICT, science and technology, infrastructure and education has improved the quality of life for millions of Africans.

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The SADC developed from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was established in 1980. It adopted its current name during a summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, in August 1992. Before 1992, the aim of the SADCC was to forge close economic cooperation with southern African countries excluding South Africa, to bolster their economies and reduce their dependence on the South African economy.

From 1992, when the organisation became the SADC, its mandate changed to the following:

- establishing an open economy based on equality, mutual benefit and balanced development

In October 2013, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation launched a new 24-hour online radio station, Ubuntu Radio. It is the first of its kind in Africa and the first in South Africa to operate under the auspices of a government institution for non-commercial purposes. The station is accessible on the internet, at www.ubunturadio.com.

- breaking down tariff barriers
- promoting trade exchanges and mutual investment
- realising the free movement of goods, personnel and labour service
- achieving the unification of tariffs and currencies
- establishing a free trade zone.

The initial member states were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. South Africa became a member after 1994.

In June 2011, 26 African countries signed an agreement to create a free trade area (FTA) that covers more than half of Africa.

In July 2012, Ministers from the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation convened in Pretoria, Gauteng, for their 14th meeting, which charted a way forward for the region.

The Tripartite FTA (TFTA) Agreement is part of the SADC's ongoing efforts to create strong relations within southern Africa through trade. This is evident from the ongoing discussions to achieve inter-regional cooperation and integration among the RECs of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and SADC aimed at forming a TFTA with the ultimate goal of establishing a single customs union.

The three RECs comprise 26 countries, a combined population of close to 600 million people, and a combined gross domestic product of just under US\$1 trillion. The tripartite integration process will rest on three pillars:

- market integration
- infrastructure development
- industrial development.

The TFTA is an important vehicle for regional integration. Developments within the Southern African Customs Union (Sacu) membership and the elevation of regional integration efforts continue to supplement and complement the SADC's work.

The objective of Sacu is to enhance intra-Sacu trade and overall economic growth through increased investment, improved infrastructure and expanded industrialisation. To this end, Sacu members have developed a comprehensive work programme on priority areas.

At the SADC summit in Malawi during August 2013, two women were ushered in at the top – Malawian President Joyce Banda as chairperson and Stergomena Lawrence Tax of Tanzania as executive secretary. Tax, who was elected during the Heads of State and Government summit, took over from Dr Tomaz Augusto

Salomão, who served two terms of eight years. Tanzania handed the Chair of the Organ on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation to Namibia in 2013.

Heads of State and governments of the Sacu member states attended the fourth Sacu Summit in April 2013, held in Gaborone, Botswana to discuss various issues broadly related to regional trade and industrialisation, under the auspices of the customs union.

United Nations

The UN occupies the central and indispensable role within the global system of governance. South Africa looks to the UN to advance the global development agenda and address under-development, social integration, full employment and decent work for all and the eradication of poverty globally. Through participation in multilateral forums, South Africa also upholds the belief that the resolution of international conflicts should be peaceful and in accordance with the centrality of the UN Charter and the principles of international law. South Africa was one of the 51 founding member of the UN in 1945. Since then, UN membership has grown to 192 states. After being suspended in 1974, owing to international opposition to the policy of apartheid, South Africa was readmitted to the UN in 1994 following its transition to democracy.

UN General Assembly

President Zuma attended the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA68) in New York in September 2013.

The 2013 theme was "Setting the stage for the post-2015 agenda."

UNGA68 took place closer to the 2015 target date for achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Given the approaching deadline, international deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda have become a major focal point in the multilateral arena.

The President addressed the General Assembly on the progress made by South Africa in the implementation of the MDGs.

UN Security Council (UNSC)

In December 2012, South Africa concluded its second term as an elected member of the UNSC.

South Africa's second tenure in the UNSC was aimed at building upon its experience during its previous term by contributing to achieving peace and stability on continent and in all the regions of the world, developing effective partnerships between the UN and regional organisations in maintaining international peace and security,

advancing the African Agenda, including highlighting the continent's priorities in the area of peace and security, promoting the rule of law within multilateralism and the reform of the UN system, and working towards improving the working methods of the UNSC to make it a more legitimate, representative and effective body.

Throughout its term, South Africa sought to promote a multilateral, rules-based system. The country approached its membership of the UNSC from the premise that the UN remains the most appropriate forum for addressing international challenges in the maintenance of international peace and security, which are best served through collective cooperation.

Despite constraints, South Africa influenced a large number of UNSC outcomes and actively engaged on all issues on the Security Council's agenda pursuant to the global mandate associated with its membership.

South Africa's leadership role and significant contribution to the work of the Council on African issues particularly on Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, the DRC, Mali and Libya and its principled position on the Middle East and Western Sahara is well recognised.

Notable achievements during South Africa's tenure include its leadership role in chairing the Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the strategic intent is to find ways by which to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa and the 1540 Committee, which prevents non-state actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

South Africa also championed landmark UNSC decisions on strengthening the strategic cooperation between the UNSC and the AUPSC in Resolution 2033 as well as the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The country also co-led a Security Council Mission to Africa and led a successful visit of the Council to Timor-Leste in 2012.

South Africa participated in the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women took place at the UN headquarters, New York, in March 2013.

South Africa participated in various activities of the session and hosted and coordinated side events on gender-based violence, the economic empowerment of women as well as an event which emphasised strengthening the hand-in-hand approach in the fight against gender-based violence, strategies and approaches for ending violence against women, and strengthening partnerships for working solutions. The theme for the session was "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls." The review theme for the session was "Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV and AIDS."

UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc)

Ecosoc is a premier organ of the UN responsible for economic and social development matters of the world.

South Africa assumed membership of Ecosoc on 1 January 2013. This will give South Africa an opportunity to be located at the centre of the debate on the global development agenda, including the acceleration of the implementation of the MDGs.

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco)

South Africa is an active participant in key Unesco governance structures such as the General Conference and the World Heritage Committee, and has previously served on the executive board.

Since its return to Unesco, South Africa has also ratified a number of Unesco conventions including the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (July 1997), Convention Against Discrimination in Education (March 2000), the International Convention Against Doping in Sport (November 2006) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (December 2006).

South Africa also acceded to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention (December 2003). National interaction with Unesco's various areas of work is coordinated through the South African National Commission for Unesco, whose secretariat is hosted by the Department of Basic Education.

UN Human Rights Council

South Africa played a leadership role in several inter-governmental processes at the UN pertaining to human rights and social development issues. It is also the current Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), which objective is to elaborate a legally binding regulatory framework and to ensure that PMSCs are held accountable for their activities.

South Africa is also the current chair of the Adhoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards to the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination aimed at combating contemporary forms of racism.

UN-South Africa Strategic Cooperation Framework (UNSCF)

In February 2013, South Africa and the UN signed a five-year UNSCF that will help

government as it tries to meet its development agenda and implement its Programme of Action. Government has high expectations that this will provide a framework for cooperation that will enhance the contribution of the UN towards the realisation of the country's development agenda.

South Africa strongly supported a multilateral, rules-based system as a means of achieving a better country, and contributing to a better and safer Africa, in a better world.

The framework symbolised South Africa's recognition of cooperation and learning from the global institutions.

Under the "delivering as one" concept, the UN system sought to strengthen further the management and coordination of UN activities so that they can make an even more effective contribution to the achievement of internationally agreed upon development goals.

To ensure an appropriate oversight of the framework, a steering committee would be established to give strategic direction and guidance in implementing the framework. It would then be monitored and reviewed annually, through meetings with government and other stakeholders.

UN agencies would develop joint annual working plans, hold joint reviews and undertake monitoring activities as much as possible, in the interests of alignment and harmonisation, and to reduce the transaction costs for government.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

South Africa is one of the 194 member states that constitute the WHO. The country takes part in the annual World Health Assembly (WHA), which is the WHO's supreme decision-making body.

South Africa also takes part in the WHO's Regional Committee for Africa which convenes annually after the WHA to reflect on the decisions taken at the WHA and plan for the following year's WHA.

Through its participation in these structures, South Africa contributes to setting international norms and making decisions on key issues regarding global and public health.

Group of 20 (G20)

In 2013, the G20 marked its fifth anniversary. Leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) met in February 2013 in Durban, where they agreed to the eThekwi Declaration. The leaders expressed concerns about the stalling of the International Monetary Fund reform process.

They recalled the urgent need to implement the 2010 IMF Quota and Governance Reform, and to complete the next general quota review

by January 2014, as agreed at the G20 Seoul Summit to ensure the fund's credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness.

In September 2013, the G20 summit took place in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Leaders agreed on coordinated measures on banking reform, tax and trade regulations, and how to spark sustainable economic growth.

G20 countries account for 85% of global economic output, 80% of global trade, and two-thirds of the world's population.

Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa trade alliance

South Africa's BRICS membership will help the country and the continent to address its socio-economic challenges.

The fifth BRICS Summit was held in South Africa in March 2013. The BRICS Business Council was established during the 2013 BRICS Summit in Durban at that time, with South African businessman Patrice Motsepe named chairman of the body.

In August 2013, business leaders from the BRICS group of countries converged in Johannesburg for the first meeting of the BRICS Business Council. In September 2013, leaders of the BRICS bloc met away from the G20 meeting, which was held in Russia. The BRICS bloc emerged saying the G20 leaders could do more to boost global demand and market confidence. The summit presented a unique high-level opportunity for South Africa to further support key priority areas of the African Agenda.

They welcomed the good progress made towards the establishment of the BRICS-led New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA). Progress has been made in negotiating the capital structure, membership, shareholding and governance of the bank. It will have an initial subscribed capital of US\$50 billion from the BRICS countries. The bank is expected to fund infrastructure projects crucial for development in BRICS member countries.

On the CRA, consensus has been reached on many key aspects and operational details regarding its establishment.

As agreed in Durban, the CRA will have an initial size of US\$100 billion. South Africa committed US\$5 billion.

The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) signed three Memoranda of Agreement (MoUs) with its counterparts from China, Russia and Brazil to facilitate mutual cooperation for improved economic growth and job creation.

At the BRICS Conference, BRICS leaders pledged to boost support to Africa. BRICS can help forge a new funding model in Africa where

regional projects spanning a number of countries are favoured for finance. The continent's link to BRICS and the BRICS link to Africa offered a window of opportunity to African countries to boost trade and to industrialise.

India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) trade alliance

IBSA is a coalition of the south that has facilitated dialogue at a level previously unimaginable. Development cooperation, along with the views on tackling socio-economic distress and trading among the three nations distinguishes IBSA from BRICS. All the IBSA members are democracies and can discuss issues which cannot be discussed in BRICS summits.

IBSA continues to play its unique role as a body bringing together three democracies of the South from three continents.

The realisation of a trilateral alliance between IBSA stems from three commonalities between the three countries, namely: all three countries are vibrant democracies, they share common views on various global issues, and are substantial emerging economies within their subregions.

Apart from promoting South-South dialogue, IBSA also fosters inter-regional cooperation.

The engagement process of the IBSA countries takes place on three levels, namely: heads of state and government, government-to-government and people-to-people cooperation.

Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)

South Africa is one of the founding member states of the IOR-ARC, which was launched in Mauritius in March 1997. There are 20 Indian IOR member states.

The objectives of IOR include promoting the sustained growth and balanced development of the region and of the member states, and creating common ground for regional economic cooperation. This also includes formulating and implementing projects for economic cooperation relating to trade facilitation and liberalisation, promotion of foreign investment, academic, scientific and technological exchanges, tourism and the development of infrastructure and human resources.

Commonwealth

The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent member countries. Membership is diverse and includes developed and developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific.

Since rejoining the Commonwealth in 1994, South Africa has interacted closely with the work

of the Commonwealth contributing politically, financially and in terms of capacity and expertise to the work of the organisation.

In March 2013, South Africa hosted the first Commonwealth Conference on Education and Training of Youth Workers.

In late-August 2013, the South African Parliament hosted the 59th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Johannesburg.

In 2009, the Commonwealth embarked on a modernisation/reform process. As part of this, the organisation adopted a large number of recommendations from the Eminent Persons Group. In May 2013, member states approved a new strategic plan for the period 2013/14 to 2016/17.

In November 2013, the biannual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), under the theme "Growth with Equity: Inclusive Development" took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka. President Zuma represented South Africa. At the same time the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation attended the pre-CHOGM Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The Islamic Republic of Iran is chairing the NAM from 2012 to 2015. The NAM consists of 120 member states. It is the largest political grouping of countries outside the UN, making it an important lobby group of developing countries in global affairs.

The next NAM Summit is scheduled to be held in Venezuela during 2015.

International relations South Africa and Africa

South Africa regards Africa as the centrepiece of its foreign policy and remains committed to promoting the African Agenda, particularly regional peace, security and stability, as the key determinants for socio-economic development on the continent.

Relations with southern Africa Angola

South Africa and Angola continue to work together in maintaining peace, stability, regional integration and the promotion of the SADC Agenda. Both countries are still part of respectively the SADC Troika and the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Troika.

Angola is one of South Africa's major trading partners in Africa with almost 90% of Angolan exports to South Africa being petroleum-related products.

In August 2013, President Zuma travelled to Angola where he had consultations with his counterparts President José Eduardo Dos

Santos, and the President of the DRC, Joseph Kabila Kabanga.

They discussed a range of issues relating to peace and stability in the region, particularly current peace efforts in the DRC. The meeting was a follow-up to a meeting held by the three leaders in March, which was aimed at strengthening bilateral political and economic relations between the countries.

By October 2013, South Africa and Angola had signed over 22 bilateral agreements and MoUs covering a wide range of sectors such as trade and industry, energy, science and technology, sport, mining, tourism and defence.

Botswana

President Zuma hosted his Botswana counterpart, President Ian Khama, for a visit aimed at strengthening and deepening the existing historical relations between the two countries in November 2013.

The two presidents presided over the inaugural session of the Bi-National Commission (BNC) which they established in 2012.

The BNC is a framework for cooperation, which elevates the two existing bilateral cooperation frameworks, namely the Joint Permanent Commission on Cooperation and the Joint Permanent Commission for Cooperation on Defence and Security from Ministerial level to Head of State level.

South African companies have a huge presence in Botswana and are involved in various sectors including mining, housing, food and beverages, construction, retail, hotels and leisure, banking and medical services. These companies continue to contribute to the growth and development of the neighbouring Botswana economy.

Democratic Republic of Congo

President Zuma attended the signing ceremony of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region in Ethiopia in February 2013.

The 11 signatories to the framework included the presidents and representatives of Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Republic of Congo, the DRC, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AUC signed as witnesses and guarantors, along with the chairpersons of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the SADC.

The Minister of Energy participated in a workshop in March 2013, that worked towards

the finalisation of the Grand Inga Project Treaty in the DRC. The project has the potential to supply clean and cost-effective hydroelectric power to meet the needs of the DRC and surrounding or nearby countries, including South Africa.

The two countries signed the treaty in October 2013 during President Zuma's state visit to the DRC that was aimed at strengthening existing relations between the two countries.

The growing bilateral economic cooperation between South Africa and the DRC received added impetus through a two-day Business Forum held in Kinshasa at the same time.

Lesotho

Bilateral cooperation between South Africa and Lesotho includes trade and investment, security, energy, transport, agriculture, tourism and water.

With South Africa being Lesotho's only neighbour, the economies of the two countries are interdependent. South African companies have a significant presence in Lesotho and are involved in various sectors such as housing, food and beverages, construction, retail, hotels and leisure, banking, and medical services.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project has been in operation for over 20 years and supplies South Africa with about 780 million cubic meters of water a year. When fully operational, Phase 2 of the project will substantially increase the volume of water supplied to South Africa.

In April 2013, South Africa and Lesotho resolved to work towards increasing economic activities that will lead to the creation of sustainable jobs that are mutually beneficial to the two economies.

President Zuma met and held discussions with Lesotho Prime Minister Thomas Thabane in May 2013, in an effort to promote the African Agenda and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

The two countries agreed to work towards the full implementation of the agreement on free movement of people, goods and services between the common borders, which will in turn boost trade.

Malawi

South Africa and Malawi share strong historical political, economic and cultural ties and warm relations in the context of regional integration and intra-Africa trade.

The then Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Marius Fransman, participated in a meeting of the SADC in Lilongwe, Malawi, in October 2013.

Mozambique

In February 2013, President Zuma met with his Mozambican counterpart, Armando Guebuza, in Pretoria within the context of the enhanced bilateral cooperation between their respective countries.

At the end of August 2013, South African enterprises got a chance to present their services at the Feira Internacional De Maputo (Facim) in Mozambique.

The objective of the South African National Pavilion at Facim was to promote and present South African potential in general, with more focus on the participating companies to attract potential buyers, distributors and agents, and to raise awareness among South African industries about trade opportunities available globally.

Relations between South Africa and Mozambique were strengthened by growing ties in trade, investment tourism, migration and security.

Sectors targeted for the trade fair were agriculture and agro-processing, mining and capital equipment and allied services, electro-technical equipment, automotive components, built environment, security equipment and protective gear and boat-building.

Facim is an international multi-sectoral trade fair hosted annually in Mozambique with approximately 50 000 visitors and exhibitors from different regions and countries.

Namibia

The economies of South Africa and Namibia are interlinked with South Africa being one of Namibia's major trading partners.

Namibia imports 80% of its consumables from South Africa. South African companies have a large presence in Namibia and are involved in various sectors such as housing, food and beverages, construction, hotels and leisure, banking, and medical services.

In May 2013, Millennium Challenge Account Namibia (MCA-N) Compact contracted the South

South Africa hosted the first Commonwealth Conference on Education and Training of Youth Workers from 18 to 20 March 2013, at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. Participants agreed that Commonwealth countries around the world must shift their focus on innovation and creative thinking to find opportunities to improve the lives of its citizens, especially the youth. Commonwealth Day – aimed at promoting an understanding of global issues, international cooperation and the work of the Commonwealth to improve the lives of its two billion citizens – is celebrated annually on the second Monday in March.

In 2013, members agreed to focus on the critical issue of "Opportunity through Enterprise – Unlocking Potential with Innovation and Excellence."

African non-governmental organisation (NGO), Open Africa and Grant Thornton Consulting to assist the Namibia Tourism Board in plotting three self-drive travel routes in Namibia.

President Zuma arrived in Windhoek in November 2013 for a state visit aimed at strengthening political and economic relations.

President Zuma, who led a high-level delegation, held private talks with his counterpart, President Hifikepunye Pohamba.

The highlight of the visit was the inauguration of the BNC between the two nations, which served as an important mechanism for the strengthening and enhancement of cooperation.

Swaziland

The Kingdom of Swaziland and South Africa share common borders and have very strong common cultural links. Since South Africa's re-entry to the Commonwealth, relations have been conducted at high-commissioner level.

Both countries are members of key sub-regional, regional and international organisations, including the Sacu, the SADC, the AU, the Commonwealth and the UN.

A bilateral agreement between Swaziland and South Africa provides a mechanism for the two countries to cooperate in areas of mutual benefit, ensuring that healthy relations are maintained and further developed.

Tanzania

South Africa established formal diplomatic relations with Tanzania in 1994, immediately after attaining its freedom.

The bilateral relations have been characterised by high-level interaction between the two countries aimed at consolidating and strengthening political, economic and social cooperation.

South Africa is one of the top 10 major investors in Tanzania and accounts for approximately 10% of total investment in Tanzania.

South African exports are concentrated predominantly in the areas of manufacturing, including machinery, mechanical appliances, paper, rubber products, vehicles, iron and steel, services and technology.

Zambia

South Africa and Zambia maintain solid economic cooperation as evidenced by the presence of several South African companies in Zambia. Improved cooperation in a variety of areas such as air services and infrastructural development present economic opportunities to the South African private sector and parastatals.

Zimbabwe

South Africa and Zimbabwe have a common and long history of regional affiliation and cultural ties. Zimbabwe is one of South Africa's main trade partners in Africa and several South African companies operate in Zimbabwe in sectors such as mining, tourism, agriculture, banking, manufacturing and retail.

Uganda

Relations between South Africa and Uganda date back to the time of the struggle against apartheid when Uganda provided support to and solidarity with the South African liberation movement.

Bilateral cooperation between the countries includes trade and investment, defence and security, agriculture, water and environmental affairs, social development, public works and science and technology.

Kenya

South Africa and Kenya occupy key roles in their respective regions on the continent. Relations between the two countries were upgraded to full diplomatic status on 12 April 1994.

In April 2013, President Zuma attended the inauguration of the President-elect Uhuru Kenyatta in Kenya's capital Nairobi.

Ethiopia

Bilateral economic relations with Ethiopia were revived in 1995, when South Africa opened an embassy in Addis Ababa.

The two countries have a number of bilateral agreements in place that establish a regulatory framework to facilitate political, economic and social interaction such as an agreement on the avoidance of double taxation.

The umbrella agreement provides for the establishment of a Joint Ministerial Commission that will meet every two years.

Indian Ocean Islands

South Africa's political, economic and diplomatic relations with the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles remain strong.

Relations with central Africa

Gabon

South Africa and Gabon have a legal framework through a cooperation agreement.

Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

Diplomatic relations between São Tomé and Príncipe and South Africa were established in May 1994.

In April 2013, a joint technical team from the Department of Water Affairs and from Rand

Water undertook a fact-finding mission to São Tomé and Príncipe on what South Africa can do to provide water treatment support.

They identified infrastructure refurbishment, the provision of rainwater harvesting tanks and knowledge sharing on waste water management as critical areas of intervention.

President Zuma hosted his São Tomé and Príncipe counterpart, President Manuel Pinto Da Costa, who was on a state visit aimed at revitalising diplomatic relations between the two countries in August 2013.

The two presidents discussed and cemented cooperation in key priority areas such as energy, water and health.

Republic of the Congo

In February 2014, the Republic of the Congo bestowed its Order of Merit on Mathews Phoza at a ceremony in Brazzaville occurring during the 25th anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Brazzaville peace accord, which paved the way for the end of the Angolan civil war and Namibia attaining independence.

President Zuma attended the Forbes Africa Forum in July 2013. President Denis Sassou-N'Gesso invited him to attend the forum. The forum focused on the theme "The emergence of an African middle class: conditions, issues and challenges."

During his visit to the Republic of Congo, President Zuma used the opportunity to discuss with President Sassou-N'Gesso issues related to strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, and also on matters of peace and security in the central African region.

Equatorial Guinea

In February 2013, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry visited Equatorial Guinea to explore business opportunities and increase trade and investment with a business delegation comprising representatives from 13 South African companies. Targeted sectors included agro-processing, infrastructure, electro-technical, and capital and mining equipment.

Cameroon

Cameroon is the economic hub of the Central African Region and exports commodities to most countries of the zone. The seaport of Doulla in Cameroon is used to export goods to landlocked countries in the region such as Chad and the Central Africa Republic (CAR). Many South African companies have already seized business opportunities there. Cameroon is a member of the AU, has adopted Nepad programmes and subscribes to the MDGs. In pursuit of South Africa's regional economic

integration and developmental agenda for the continent, Cameroon has been identified as a strategic partner.

Central African Republic

In January 2013, 200 Department of Defence and Military Veterans personnel were deployed in the CAR, in the aftermath of the coup d'état that toppled President Bozize. The SANDF withdrew its soldiers during April 2013.

In the same month, President Zuma attended the Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which discussed the CAR.

Chad

In 2013, South Africa appointed a Resident Ambassador in N'djamena.

The discovery and exploitation of oil in Chad and its authorities that have appropriately channelled the revenues has led to the country's economic take-off. South Africa has received aid and other related humanitarian requests from Chad.

In 2013, the African Renaissance Fund supported a project proposal for food relief to the government of Chad to the value of R20 million, which included maize, sorghum, fortified milk, palm oil and pearl millet.

Relations with North and West Africa and the Horn of Africa

Algeria

President Zuma undertook a working visit to Algeria to hold bilateral consultations with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in May 2013. The visit took place within the context of the historic and excellent bilateral relations that exist between South Africa and Algeria.

Among the issues discussed was the convening of the Sixth Session of the BNC in South Africa and the preceding BNC Ministerial Mid-Term Review to evaluate the status of bilateral relations.

South Africa and Algeria continue to work hand-in-hand in building a stronger AU and its structures. To this end, regional developments such as the Mali and CAR crises and the general security situation in the Sahel and Maghreb regions also featured prominently in the consultations with President Bouteflika.

Western Sahara

In June 2013, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation hosted her Western Sahara counterpart, Mohamed Salem Ould Salek, for bilateral consultations in Pretoria.

They signed MoUs on diplomatic consultations; financial contribution toward the construction of a youth sport development complex, and financial

contribution towards the humanitarian landmine assistance programme.

The signing of these agreements will further solidify the strong relations that already exist between South Africa and Western Sahara.

Egypt

South Africa and Egypt have created a political environment that is conducive to business. As part of the MoU on Economic Cooperation signed with Egypt in 2009 a trade and investment seminar held in February 2013 in Kempton Park, provided an opportunity for South African and Egyptian business people in various sectors to meet and explore opportunities.

The seminar also formed part of the two countries' efforts to facilitate intra-Africa trade, by ensuring that business communities between the two partnering countries acquire insight into each other's markets.

Côte d'Ivoire

South Africa has also participated in discussions on Côte d'Ivoire at the UNSC and supported its resolution on the extension of the mandate of the UN Special Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the French forces that were to support it until 13 July 2013.

South Africa is committed to working with the government of Côte d'Ivoire in its quest for national unity and reconciliation.

In January 2013, North West Premier Thandi Modise led a delegation of the provincial government scheduled to meet with Ministers from the Côte d'Ivoire delegation, which included the Ministers of the promotion of youth, sport and recreation, Alain Michel Lobognon, and tourism Roger Kacou.

South Sudan

South Sudan and South Africa upgraded the missions in their respective capitals to fully fledged embassies. By January 2014, South Africa had trained more than 1 600 government officials from South Sudan as part of a capacity-building programme within the context of the AU PCRD initiative.

Various engagements with senior Sudanese and South Sudanese officials to discuss the negotiation process illustrated South Africa's ongoing support to the AU negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan over post-independence issues.

Somalia

In January 2013, South Africa pledged its support for Somalia's new government and the country on its road towards a prosperous and stable democracy.

Nigeria

Nigeria is considered one of South Africa's most important partners in pursuing the vision of African renewal. As two of the strongest economies in Africa, cooperation between the two countries is pivotal to the growth of the continent.

President Zuma paid a working visit to President Goodluck Jonathan in Abuja in April 2013. The two presidents met within the context of focusing attention on the bilateral, regional, continental and international relations between the two countries. A number of agreements and MoUs were signed at the time.

In December 2013, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms Elizabeth Mabete and a business delegation were in Nigeria on an outward selling and investment mission.

Ghana

In November 2013, during his first State visit to Ghana, President Zuma held talks with President John Mahama.

Three MoUs were signed during the visit namely on Transport-Related Matters, Bilateral Air Service Agreement and Electricity.

A business forum, attended by over 150 business people from South Africa, took place on the sidelines.

Relations between South Africa and Ghana have matured over the years with an increase in bilateral trade from US\$32 million in 2008 to US \$60,9 million in 2013.

South Africa will participate in a National Pavilion at the Ghana International Trade Fair in 2014.

Burkina Faso

South Africa and Burkina Faso are working on a draft MoU on economic and technical cooperation, and a draft agreement between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso and Business Unity South Africa.

Cape Verde

Bilateral discussions on a General Cooperation Agreement, lead to the signing of a Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC), early in 2013.

Senegal

In September 2013, President Zuma travelled to Senegal where he met with his counterpart President Macky Sall to strengthen bilateral relations and exchange views on various regional and global issues.

The state visit gave President Zuma and his delegation an opportunity to engage with the Senegalese government on specific areas of

interest, including building defence capacity, trade and economic development, mining and mineral beneficiation, water purification and job creation among other things.

South Africa and Senegal continued to play an important role in promoting peace and stability through participating in peacekeeping operations in their regions.

Niger

In October 2013, South Africa and Niger recommitted to strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, as well as working together to promote peace and stability in Africa. This emerged after the inaugural session of the JCC, which the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and her counterpart Mohamed Bazoum co-chaired.

During their official talks, the two Ministers expressed satisfaction at the warm and fraternal relations that exist between the two countries.

They also expressed their desire to deepen bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the fields of food security; geology and mining, energy, security as well as new areas of cooperation such as arts and culture, tourism, trade and industry; and infrastructure development.

Relations with Asia and the Middle East

The People's Republic of China

South Africa and China have enjoyed 15 years of formal diplomatic relations. It has been proposed that 2014 be heralded as the Year of South Africa in China and that 2015 be declared the Year of China in South Africa.

The Chinese government also provided 200 scholarships to South African students.

South Africa is China's largest trading partner in Africa and the bilateral trade volume accounts for more than a quarter of China-Africa trade.

According to the Beijing Declaration, China and South Africa will work together to improve the structure of bilateral trade by encouraging the trade of high value-added manufactured goods and increasing China's investment in South Africa.

The two sides will continue to deepen their cooperation in infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, railways, ports, power plants, airports and housing.

China and African countries have pledged to ensure the full implementation of the proposals enshrined in the Beijing Action Plan 2013 to

In July 2013, the United Nations (UN) appointed former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as executive director of UN Women.

2015 of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

South Africa has taken over co-chairmanship of the FOCAC from Egypt, on behalf of Africa, for the next six years. The forum is one of the most strategic partnerships between Africa and its development partners.

The sixth Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2015.

During March 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Zuma signed several agreements in various fields that would serve to strengthen the already cordial ties between South Africa and China.

On the sidelines of the International Labour Conference 2013 in June in Geneva, the Minister of Labour met with Xiaochu Wang, China's Deputy Minister of Human Resources in Social Security.

The two countries – who are both part of BRICS – could learn a lot from each other on matters pertaining to collective bargaining, industrial relations, inspections, enforcement services, and social protection.

The last in a series of three South African expos kicked off in Beijing in September 2013, with South Africa looking to foster a more balanced and sustainable relationship with China.

The expo, held at the Beijing Exhibition Centre, was a platform to present South Africa's Top 10 value-added products and services for export to China, which is South Africa's largest trading partner. It attracted scores of Chinese businessmen and ordinary people.

The three expos also present the Top 10 investment opportunities, which include agro-processing, chemicals, automotive steel and aluminium.

A total of 63 South African companies participated in the expos, which began in Xiamen and were now concluding in Beijing.

In October 2013, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe and Chinese Vice-President Li Yuanchao co-chaired the fifth South Africa-China BNC in Beijing.

The BNC was preceded by the Strategic Dialogue Mechanism, which comprises sectoral committees on foreign affairs, economic and trade matters, science and technology, education, energy and minerals.

The 2013 BNC reviewed progress made in implementing previous BNC decisions.

The BNC discussed, among other things, regional and global geopolitical issues.

The two countries signed bilateral agreements promoting cooperation in the areas of human resources development and tourism.

Mongolia

In 2013, South Africa and Mongolia strengthened bilateral relations by exploring areas of further cooperation between the two countries when Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe held talks with that country's Prime Minister, Norovyn Altankhuyag.

South Africa and Mongolia could work together to meet that country's international commitments on climate change.

Mongolia's vast coal reserves offer an opportunity for collaboration on clean coal technologies. South Africa's coal-to-liquid technology would mitigate and possibly reduce the country's contribution to greenhouse gases.

East Asia

Japan

In 2013, Japan and South Africa celebrated 103 years of official relations. Japan is South Africa's third-largest trading partner with the two countries cooperating in various fields such as training and skills development.

In February 2013, the Department of Trade and Industry (the dti) and the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd signed a MoU that will see the two parties collaborate in increasing Japanese investment into South Africa and strengthening relations between the two.

The MoU emanates from a visit to Japan by the Minister of Trade and Industry in 2012, where both parties agreed to collaborate in the area of increasing Japanese investment into South Africa.

In March 2013, a South African delegation attended the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference, a strategic partnership between Africa and Japan, was launched in 1993 to serve as a consultative forum for development assistance to Africa.

President Zuma participated in the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-V) held in Yokohama, in May 2013. This was followed by a working visit on 4 June 2013.

The TICAD is a strategic partnership between Africa and Japan that was launched in 1993, with a view to serve as a consultative forum for development assistance to Africa. The 20th anniversary of the TICAD Process coincided with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the OAU/AU, in 2013. The TICAD-V Summit was held under the theme, "Hand in Hand with a Dynamic Africa," which symbolises the growing economic stature of Africa in the global economy.

About 40 African heads of state participated in the TICAD Summit, which takes place every five years.

At the summit, the African heads of state and government, Japan and the TICAD partners adopted the TICAD-V Declaration, as well as its five-year action plan that will guide the strategic cooperation between Africa and Japan between 2013 and 2017.

Republic of Korea (ROK)

Formal diplomatic relations between South Africa and the ROK were established in December 1992. Increasingly the focus of the bilateral relationship is on economic and business links.

The ROK is South Africa's fourth-largest trading partner in Asia, while South Africa is the ROK's largest trading partner in Africa. Trade between the two countries encompasses a wide variety of products ranging from minerals to sophisticated high-technology electric products.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

South Africa established diplomatic relations with the DPRK in August 1998. The two countries enjoy cordial relations, which date back due to the historic support that the DPRK provided during the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. The South African ambassador to China is also accredited to the DPRK's capital, Pyongyang.

In November 2013, Deputy Minister Ebrahim, paid an official visit to the DPRK to hold political consultations and review bilateral relations. The visit also took place in the context of the 15th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties. Then Deputy Minister Ebrahim held consultations with Vice-Minister Kim Hyong Jun, and paid the Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun and Kim Yong Nam, the President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly courtesy calls.

He shared South Africa's experience of denuclearisation, highlighting the great benefits that accrued to South Africa from its decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons in 1994.

The DPRK was encouraged to recommence the family reunion programme with the ROK, both on humanitarian grounds and as a confidence-building measure.

As part of the programme arranged by the DPRK government, the South African delegation visited the demilitarised zone at Panmunjom as well as various newly constructed social amenities in Pyonyang showing the progress that the DPRK has made in recent years.

However, economic relations between the two countries remain limited owing to the sanctions imposed by the UNSC because of the DPRK's nuclear programme, which affects the ongoing tension in the Korean Peninsula.

Central Asia

There is no South African representation in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan, but the South African ambassador in Turkey is accredited to these countries on a non-resident basis.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan and South Africa established diplomatic relations in March 1992. The South African Embassy in Kazakhstan was opened in December 2003 in Almaty, and relocated to Astana in February 2008.

Deputy Minister Ebrahim, hosted Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kairat Sarybay, in October 2013.

Sarybay was in South Africa to co-chair the third Round of Intergovernmental Consultations.

South Africa and Kazakhstan have substantial economic interests, which overlap in several important areas such as trade, the production and collaborative marketing of strategic minerals, technology exchange, machine production, as well as oil procurement for South Africa.

The President of Kazakhstan was on a state visit to South Africa in December 2013, during which he signed several draft agreements.

Azerbaijan

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the oil-rich Azerbaijan came under the spotlight in May 2013. Deputy Minister Fransman, was on an official visit, which reviewed the relations between the two countries.

Deputy Minister Fransman held discussions with his counterpart Araz Beyukaqa Oğlu Azimov to review the status of bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and multilateral issues of common interest.

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Azerbaijan were established in 1991.

The South African Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, is accredited on a non-residential basis to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan opened a new embassy in South Africa in January 2012.

Turkey

South Africa's major exports to Turkey comprise mineral products, base metals, machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipment, chemical and allied products, vehicles, aircraft, iron and steel, organic chemicals, ores, slag and ash.

In November 2013, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry addressed a business seminar in Istanbul while in Turkey with a business delegation on an Outward Selling and Investment Mission.

South Asia

South Africa's economic strategy is strongly focused on deepening trade and investment linkages with the south, particularly with countries that offer potential for future growth and where synergies and complementaries in products and technologies exist.

In South Asia, South Africa enjoys cordial relations with India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and the Maldives.

India

In many respects, South Africa and India share a common vision on a range of global issues and domestic challenges, including the need to address the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment, deepening democracy, protecting human rights and reforming institutions of global governance.

In addition to bilateral cooperation, South Africa and India cooperate at multilateral level in pursuit of common objectives in institutions and organisations such as the UN, the NAM, the India-Africa Forum, IBSA and BRICS.

South Africa's trade relations with India have flourished since the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1993.

Trade statistics with India continue to reflect the potential that exists for expanding the commercial relationship.

In the context of south Asia, India – South Africa's strategic partner – is by far South Africa's largest trading partner. South Africa's main exports to India include coal, gold, diamonds and phosphates, while South Africa's main imports include pharmaceuticals, textiles and clothing, spices, machinery and metal products. South Africa currently ranks second in the list of African exporters to India.

In October 2013, the third Africa-India Trade Ministers' Meeting took place in Johannesburg. Ministers of trade from several African countries including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Benin, Namibia, Senegal and Libya attended the high-level gathering.

Pakistan

Pakistan and South Africa enjoy cordial, bilateral relations.

South Africa views Pakistan as an important role-player in the international arena and South Africa welcomes the strengthening of democracy in Pakistan. South Africa has identified additional avenues of cooperation regarding law enforcement issues, an Extradition Treaty, an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, an MoU on Cooperation in Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics, Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals.

Sri Lanka

Bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and South Africa has seen a steady increase in growth in both exports and imports.

In November 2013, President Zuma attended the Commonwealth Heads of Governments meeting in Sri Lanka.

South-East Asia

Strengthening South-South relations remains an important pillar of South African's foreign policy, especially in Asia, a region that has surpassed the EU as the country's biggest trading partner.

Thailand

In August 2013, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation hosted her Thai counterpart, Surapong Tovichakchaikul, for a working visit that redefined and refocused the priority areas of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The visit came as the two countries celebrated 20 years of diplomatic interaction characterised by strong state-to-state and government-to-government relations that include cooperation at many levels, bilateral as well as multilateral.

During the past two decades, Thailand has become South Africa's biggest trading partner in Southeast Asia and South Africa has become Thailand's biggest trading partner on the continent.

Thailand is also the second most important destination for South African tourists. According to official South African trade statistics, the total volume of bilateral trade in 2012 was R26,8 billion, up from R19,8 billion in 2011.

In an international multilateral context, Thailand is an important partner and ally for South Africa in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia

President Zuma arrived in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 2013, on an official visit to boost political, economic and social ties with the southeast Asian country.

The visit, which celebrated the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and a free, democratic South Africa, boosted cooperation in business, trade and investment, and also served to promote South Africa as a viable destination for Malaysian tourists, business and investments.

A meeting of the South African-Malaysian Business Forum has also enabled leading South African business people to interact with their Malaysian counterparts to identify opportunities for business in sectors of mutual interest.

Malaysia remains the largest investor in South Africa from the Southeast Asian region.

Since 1994, Malaysia has assisted more than 300 South Africans in their studies that range from short courses to full scholarships for degrees in engineering and information technology.

A number of South African universities have signed MoUs with their Malaysian counterparts.

Vietnam

Over the past 20 years, the relationship between South Africa and Vietnam has grown into a multi-faceted relationship with growing cooperation in many fields, rapid growth in people-to-people links and strong state-to-state and government-to-government relations, which includes cooperation at many levels – bilateral, as well as multilateral.

Political relations with Vietnam are strong, with a substantial exchange of high-level visits between the two countries over the past few years.

The protection of South Africa's wildlife, particularly the rhino, has been high on the agenda of discussions with Vietnam.

Regarding cooperation in the field of wildlife protection, the two countries shared concerns about the illegal trade in protected wildlife species and products, especially rhino, and agreed to work together to put an end to this issue.

In 2013, the two signed an action plan that promotes cooperation between the two countries in law enforcement and compliance with legislation such as the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites).

The implementation plan will see the development of joint legislative efforts to conserve biodiversity, build capacity and promote the participation of international organisations and NGOs in the process.

It also includes strengthening cooperation through the exchange of information, best practice and research, technology use, transfer and development, natural resource management, wildlife trade and protected areas management.

Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Timor-Leste

South Africa's political relations with Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Timor-Leste are cordial and friendly.

In October 2013, South Africa signed a memorandum aimed at curbing rhino poaching with the government of the Lao PDR.

The MoU on Biodiversity was accompanied by the endorsement of an implementation plan, putting into action steps to eradicate wildlife crimes.

Myanmar

Like the rest of the international community, South Africa has welcomed the political reform process underway in Myanmar and has supported all efforts aimed at opening up the political space for participation by all the people of Myanmar through the political parties of their choice.

In December 2013, Deputy Minister Ebrahim was in Myanmar to explore avenues to boost bilateral relations between the two countries. The visit focused on trade and investment, according to his ministry.

The deputy minister also had bilateral discussions with his counterpart, Thant Kyaw, and paid a courtesy call on Vice-President Sai Mauk Kham and met with the country's Minister of Commerce, U Win Myint.

Philippines

In January 2013, DIRCO hosted the inaugural meeting of the South Africa-Philippines Bilateral Consultative Forum. The meeting came after the signing of the agreement between the two countries on the sidelines of the 67th session of the UNGA in September 2012, in New York, United States of America (USA). The forum serves as an instrument for structured bilateral consultations with the aim of advancing cooperation between the two countries.

The South African government established formal diplomatic relations with the Philippines in November 1993. The Philippine Embassy in Pretoria was established in June 1994. South Africa, in turn, established an embassy in Manila in December 2004.

Relations between South Africa and the Philippines are strong both at bilateral and multilateral levels. Both countries are influential in organisations of the south, including the NAM and the G77+China.

On the economic front, both countries have undertaken efforts to enhance bilateral trade and commercial relations.

In November 2013, South Africa joined the international community in making a contribution to rescue efforts in the typhoon-ravaged Philippines.

South Africa contributed R4 million in response to the call for international assistance by the government of the Philippines.

The contribution by South Africa was made to Rescue SA towards its rescue operations to the Philippines in the wake of the super typhoon Haiyan, which has claimed more than 5 000 lives, caused many injuries and left behind a trail of devastation.

Australasia and the Pacific islands

Australia

South Africa and Australia have a history of productive cooperation across a range of sectors and issues, including fisheries protection, mining, law enforcement, sport, tourism, education and training in fields such as ICT, public administration, mining and resources management, defence relations and customs cooperation.

Australia is the sixth-largest export destination for South African goods. The majority of exports from South Africa to Australia are finished goods. Exports of high-quality passenger motor vehicles head the list.

With its renewed focus on Africa, Australia has committed to work together with the African continent to address development challenges in such areas as human resource development, mining and resources management and infrastructure development.

South Africa and Australia work closely together for the benefit of third countries such as Zimbabwe in the areas of sanitation and revenue collection.

South Africa and Australia also work closely together at multilateral level in organisations and institutions such as the Commonwealth, the UN and the Cairns Group particularly on issues that affect Africa.

New Zealand

At bilateral level, South Africa and New Zealand enjoy close cooperation in business, tourism, agriculture, disarmament, fisheries, environmental protection, indigenous people and human rights issues.

In sport, South Africa and New Zealand have strong ties – especially in rugby and cricket, but in recent years also soccer.

The two countries enjoy productive cooperation at multilateral level. Both countries are members of the Valdivia Group (Group of Temperate Southern Hemisphere Countries on Environment), which aims to promote the Southern Hemisphere's

The emergence of women as political and business leaders was discussed at the Global Summit of Women, in which South Africa participated in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in June 2013.

The Global Summit of Women is a non-profit organisation headed by the International Planning Committee of Women leaders from different parts of the world.

In addition to focusing on the emergence of women as political and business leaders, the summit provided information on access to the Malaysian and Asian-Pacific markets.

Over 1 000 women leaders shared their winning strategies to advance women's economic lives and ensure global prosperity.

views in international environmental meetings and enhance scientific cooperation.

The two countries also enjoy a close working relationship within the context of the Antarctic Treaty and Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement, and interact regularly within the context of the World Trade Organisation and the Cairns Group.

Relations with the Middle East

South Africa's relationship with the Arab States remains cordial, with ongoing engagements at various political and economic levels that are anchored by the strategic objective of strengthening South-South relations.

The Outward Selling Mission to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in November 2013 aimed to expose South African companies to the Middle Eastern market and deepen bilateral trade and investment relations between these countries.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

South Africa is committed to maintaining cordial diplomatic and trade relations with the UAE. South African companies have made a major contribution to the development of the UAE economy with over 200 of them having representative offices in the UAE.

The potential for greater interaction between the two countries is enhanced through the 56 weekly flights between South Africa and the UAE. South Africa and the UAE have signed five bilateral agreements, which provide the framework for cooperation.

Iran

South Africa and Iran have established a Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC) to allow for a high-level review of existing bilateral relations and to consider ways in which these could be expanded.

The JBC, chaired by South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, meets alternatively in South Africa and Iran biannually. The JBC is regarded as one of South Africa's most successful and longest-running bilateral mechanisms. Several South African companies are involved in major projects in Iran.

Deputy Minister Ebrahim visited the Islamic Republic of Iran in April 2013.

The Deputy Minister's visit took place at the invitation of Dr Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs of Iran, who visited South Africa in May 2012.

One of the main objectives of the visit was for the countries to exchange views on domestic and regional developments, to review the

implementation of bilateral engagements and to assess the potential for the expansion thereof, particularly in the field of education and environmental affairs.

The visit also gave the two governments the opportunity to engage on the latest nuclear developments, and human rights, with a particular emphasis on exchanging South African best practices on human rights.

Despite the challenging international situation confronting Iran, South Africa attaches significant importance to its bilateral relations with that country.

In October 2013, South Africa hosted the 11th Meeting of the South Africa-Iran Joint Commission. The Joint Commission with Iran is one of the longest-running structured bilateral mechanisms South Africa has with any country.

South Africa maintains a friendly relationship with Iran, even though the international sanctions imposed against the Islamic Republic have made trade increasingly difficult.

Because of sanctions, South Africa had to end its oil imports from Iran in June 2012. The Joint Commission will allow the two governments the opportunity to take stock of relations and to consider means in which bilateral ties might be further expanded.

Saudi Arabia

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Saudi Arabia were formalised during a visit by former President Nelson Mandela in November 1994. Two missions were established in the kingdom during March of 1995: an embassy with a chargé d'affaires in the capital Riyadh and a consulate-general in the commercial capital of Jeddah.

The consulate-general is responsible for looking after the needs of South African pilgrims performing Hajj and Umrah duties in the holy cities of Makkah al Mukarramah and Medina al Munawarra.

Saudi Arabia is a fellow G20 member and remains South Africa's largest supplier of crude oil.

Qatar

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and the State of Qatar were established in 1994, strengthened by official visits to Qatar by former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, as well as by visits of several Cabinet Ministers.

In terms of trade relations, Qatar has traditionally enjoyed a healthy trade surplus, primarily owing to its export of crude oil and petrochemicals to South Africa.

In April 2013, Deputy Minister Ebrahim

attended the fourth round of bilateral consultations in Qatar.

The visit provided an opportunity to engage the government of Qatar on developments in the region and to review the status of bilateral relations in the fields of trade and industry, energy, tourism and arts and culture.

Discussions were held on increased investment by Qatar in South Africa and on possible trilateral cooperation in Africa.

Oman

In November 2013, Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza said the province was ready to enter into an agreement with Oman to help resolve that country's food security problems. This comes after a nine-member delegation from Oman conducted a three-day tour to various agricultural projects in the province.

Kuwait

Kuwait has become an increasingly important market for South African exports and several Kuwaiti companies have made major multimillion-rand investments in the construction and development of hotels and real estate in South Africa, as well as investments on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

The third Africa-Arab Summit of Heads of State and Government opened in Kuwait City in November 2013, under the theme "Partners in Development and Investment."

The two-day summit was preceded by a joint foreign Ministerial meeting, with Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, calling on the participating countries to work in collaboration to boost the partnership between African and Arab countries.

Iraq

In 2013, the dti sent a delegation to Iraq comprising government officials and people from the private sector on an international trade initiative.

African press officers of the diplomatic community met for a sharing session in Pretoria in August 2013. This was the first meeting of press officers of the diplomatic communities based in South Africa, which was held under the theme "Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance." It contributes towards the extended recognition and celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage African press officers of the diplomatic community to report fresh news from the continent, explore more avenues to disseminate developmental news stories to the world, while allowing dialogue and engagement to take place. The Government Communication and Information System hosted the session.

The department undertook to seek ways to assist Iraqis with the challenge of obtaining South African visas, as there is no embassy in Iraq. Iraqi citizens get their visas in Jordan.

Trade relations between South Africa and Iraq were generally conducted through intermediaries and it was envisaged that from the signed agreement, a guideline for direct trade would be formulated.

Arab-Israel peace process

South Africa supports peace between Israel and the Arab world, which must involve an end to the illegal occupation by Israel of Arab land, namely in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, which has led to conflict and violence between the peoples of the region over the last six decades.

South Africa does not have a policy aimed at boycotting Israel, but discourages people from visiting Israel because of the country's continued occupation of Palestinian land.

Palestine

South Africa and Palestine have agreed to strengthen cooperation in local government and municipal development.

The two countries made the agreement at the fourth Congress of the United Cities and Local Government held in Rabat, Morocco, from 1 to 4 October 2013.

The two countries undertook to strengthen cooperation in areas including:

- legal frameworks for local governance
- urban and strategic development planning
- restructuring of local governments
- strengthening community participation in local government
- municipal engineering and planning
- municipal elections.

The similar historical experiences shared by the two countries make for a strong foundation for mutual learning. The delegations thus called on the various municipalities present to forge partnerships aimed at improving service delivery to the people.

Relations with the Americas

United States of America

Formal relations between South Africa and the USA go back as far as 1789, when the USA opened a consulate in Cape Town. South Africa continues to place a high premium on high-level political exchanges. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, travelled to the USA in November 2013 to attend the Strategic Dialogue. It is anticipated that Secretary John Kerry will travel to South Africa in 2014 for the Strategic Dialogue.

In June 2013, President Zuma hosted President Barack Obama during an official visit to South Africa. After official discussions various announcements and commitments were made by the President of the USA, the most significant were:

- The need for the extension of the USA African Growth and Opportunities Act (Agoa), which expires in 2015, as it would benefit both countries. South Africa will continue engaging the USA Congress in particular for an extension of Agoa, to secure long-term access for South African exports into the US market.
- Africa is rising and that it is the second-fastest growing region after Asia. President Zuma pointed out that the strategy towards sub-Saharan Africa that the USA launched in 2012 was well timed to take advantage of this growing market. China's economic inroads into Africa were, however, the backdrop to the USA's renewed interest in Africa.
- President Zuma put forward a range of projects which the USA could become involved in, including infrastructure development and skills development for the youth. Underpinning these investments would be the drive for regional integration, industrialisation and localisation of supply and manufacture.

The USA is a major economic partner for South Africa and continues to feature high on the list of trade and investment partners. There are about 600 companies from the USA trading in South Africa, which provide over 120 000 local jobs. These companies contribute about 30% of all corporate social investment for corporate social projects.

The USA is South Africa's third-largest trading partner and 98% of South Africa's exports enter the USA market duty-free and quota-free under the current dispensation of Agoa and the Generalised System of Preferences.

While the USA is a significant market for South Africa, South Africa is the USA's biggest market in Africa accounting for US\$7,3 billion of American exports. South Africa is also an important investor in the USA, with the announcement of an investment by Sasol in Louisiana, which could prove to be one of the biggest investments in the history of the USA.

The USA is an important supporter of South Africa's domestic priorities and has made an effort to align its assistance programmes and projects with these. The USA is a major source of official development assistance (ODA) to South Africa, contributing approximately US\$541 million in ODA per year. The major area of focus is health and AIDS in particular. Under the USA President's Emergency Plan for AIDS

Relief (Pepfar), South Africa is currently the 15th largest recipient of foreign aid from the USA.

South Africa has been very successful in using Pepfar funding to address HIV and AIDS. The Partnership Framework Implementation Plan was signed during former USA Secretary of State's visit to South Africa in August 2012. In the transition the USA will reduce its annual assistance from US\$484 to US\$250 by year 2017. The transition plan has a five-year timeline.

The USA regards South Africa as a global model because it is the first country to go from a development assistance-led effort to a country-led approach. Both countries committed that there would be no interruption of treatment and care services during the transition of direct service provision to the South African Government.

The USA understands the importance of the African Agenda to South Africa, particularly regional economic integration, which is the cornerstone of continental integration. Initiatives such as USA trilateral cooperation between the USA and the SADC region and the rest of the continent in the area of food security have been pivotal to this relationship.

Canada

Between 2008 and 2013, Canada's official development assistance to South Africa amounted to R250 million.

Canada has a long-standing and wide-ranging track record of constructive engagement, at bilateral and multilateral levels, on the African continent, ranging from peacekeeping and development aid to foreign direct investment (FDI).

President Zuma hosted the Governor-General of Canada, David Johnston, for a state visit in May 2013. This was Johnston's first visit to South Africa, which formed part of his tour of Africa, including stops in Ghana and Botswana.

The purpose of the state visit was to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. South Africa remains Canada's second-largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa.

About two thirds of South African exports to Canada relate to minerals and mining equipment, with agricultural and chemical products making up the rest. Canada views South Africa as a gateway into the SADC and the rest of Africa.

Canada's involvement in South Africa focuses on strengthening service delivery, HIV and AIDS and rural development.

In November 2013, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe was in Canada for a working visit to promote investment by Canadian companies in South Africa's mining sector.

The Deputy President met with a range of stakeholders in the mining industry including mining companies, investors, bankers and asset managers. He also held meetings with the Canada-South Africa Chamber of Commerce and the Toronto Stock Exchange and paid Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Governor-General of Canada, David Johnston, courtesy calls.

Mexico

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Mexico are good and the two countries work closely together in multilateral forums on issues such as South-South cooperation and nuclear disarmament. South Africa is Mexico's biggest trading partner in Africa.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America

The developing countries in Latin America continue to play an important role in international political bodies and formations such as the NAM, the G20 (Brazil and Mexico), BRICS (Brazil), IBSA (Brazil) and the UN. South Africa's business sector has extensive interests in the region, including SAB Miller, AngloGold Ashanti, Naspers, Denel, Sasol, PetroSA.

These relate to exports of capital equipment, intermediary goods and investments as well as a growing presence of South African companies in the service sector.

South Africa's bilateral relations with Latin America and the Caribbean continue to advance the development agenda of the South, and strengthen cooperation among developing countries through active participation in groupings of the south at regional, inter-regional and multilateral levels. In this regard, the need to build stronger and balanced relationships with Latin American and Caribbean countries is of particular importance. South Africa has observer status in Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) and acts as the region's voice in the G20.

Brazil

The presidents of South Africa and Brazil meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest. South Africa maintains the view that the Rio+20 Conference, which took place in Brazil, helped to ensure the issue of sustainable development remained a top priority on the agenda of the UN and the international community.

South Africa remains committed to continuous engagement with Brazil, as per the terms of the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in July 2010. The Ministerial-level Joint Commission met in July 2013.

Argentina

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries signed a statement of intent with her Argentine counterpart, Norberto Yauhar, in Pretoria in June 2013. Argentina is South Africa's third largest trading partner in the Latin American and Caribbean region after Brazil and Mexico.

Regular Ministerial meetings ensure continuous improvement in bilateral ties.

The fourth meeting of the Argentina-South Africa BNC took place in Buenos Aires in August 2013, co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic, Héctor Timerman, and Minister Nkoana-Mashabane.

A major outcome of the BNC was an undertaking to establish a Joint Sub-Commission on Trade and Investment within the framework of the BNC for the purposes of addressing bilateral and multilateral issues, including non-tariff barriers. In addition, the two countries signed a Tax Information Exchange Agreement, and an Agreement on Mutual Assistance between Customs Administrations.

Chile

Political relations between South Africa and Chile remain sound. The Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM) continues to serve a constructive purpose in the ongoing political dialogue between the two countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

The last JCM took place in Pretoria in July 2012. As a major foreign investor in Chile, South Africa used the opportunity to address bilateral issues such as cooperation in trade and investment and the avoidance of double taxation.

The meeting also discussed a number of other areas, including the possibility of a dialogue regarding a preferential trade agreement subject to concurrence with Sacu, science and technology and academic exchanges in the tertiary education sector.

From South Africa's perspective, Chile is seen as a "like-minded" country in terms of multilateral relations, North-South and South-South relations.

The Caribbean

South Africa enjoys cordial relations with the countries of the Caribbean. The majority of inhabitants of the Caribbean are of African descent and have strong historical and cultural links to the continent.

South Africa's endeavour in conjunction with the AU and Caricom to strengthen cooperation between Africa and the African Diaspora in the Caribbean has given added impetus to bilateral and multilateral relations.

South Africa attaches importance to strengthening its relations with the Caribbean and developing common positions on global issues such as access to the markets of the industrial north, reform of international institutions and promoting the development agenda and protection of small island states.

Colombia and Ecuador

Colombia and Ecuador are experiencing growing interest from South African companies primarily in the mineral resources sector.

The latter part of 2013 saw Ministerial visits from both Colombia and Ecuador to South Africa as a follow-up to high-level visits by South Africa to those countries in September 2013.

Peru

Deputy Minister Fransman visited Lima, Peru, in September 2013. The visit was used to strengthen political, social and economic bilateral relations. The two countries also identified new areas of cooperation.

The Pacific Alliance was also on the agenda. It is a mechanism for the economic and commercial integration of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

During his visit, Deputy Minister Fransman met with his counterpart Fernando Rojas, as well as the Deputy Minister for Social Benefits, Paola Bustamante, and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade and Tourism, Carlos Posada Ugaz. He also and he met with the Peru Investment Agency's Director, Carlos Herrera.

South Africa is one of the largest investors in Peru, with SABMiller and Anglo American operating in that country.

The main South African exports to Peru are mining equipment, paper and carton, metal sheeting and specialised structural steel.

Venezuela

Relations between South Africa and Venezuela came under discussion when Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane held talks with her counterpart, Elias Jaua Milano, in September 2013. Minister Nkoana-Mashabane was in Venezuela to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation in the areas of energy, mining, agriculture, education, as well as arts and culture.

The two countries have a MoU regarding bilateral consultations. Three MoUs were also signed by PetroSA and Petróleos de Venezuela, which granted PetroSA a block in order to explore Venezuela's oil reserves.

South African exports to Venezuela consist mainly of ferro-vanadium and related products, followed by liqueurs. South African imports from Venezuela consist mainly of oil.

Between June and July 2013, trade statistics showed imports standing at R42,5million, while exports stood at R84,6 million.

Cuba

Cuba remains a strategic partner of South Africa and the region.

Several South African medical students have graduated from Cuban medical faculties thanks to the South Africa-Cuba medical study programme.

The 80 bursaries offered by Cuba in 2013 increased the number of qualified medical practitioners in South Africa significantly. Several hundred Cuban specialists are deployed in South Africa, rendering professional services in the fields of public health, human settlements, public works and social development.

In February 2012, South Africa and Cuba signed a R350-million economic assistance package agreement geared towards helping that country improve its food security. The total package to the island nation is three-pronged, with the first portion being a R40-million grant for the purchase of seeds by Cuba. The second part of the agreement is a R100-million solidarity grant. The third portion is a R20-million credit line. This is a loan facility with R70 million made available to Cuba immediately. The JCM with Cuba takes place annually at deputy Minister level, with the last one taking place in September 2013.

Jamaica

The Jamaican and South African governments have waived visa requirements for all South African and Jamaican passport holders to enable nations from each side to enter the country for a period of up to 90 days without visas. This provision facilitates the smooth movement of South Africans and Jamaicans engaging in music, education, and sports.

United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland

United Kingdom

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the UK cover a wide spectrum and have a far-reaching impact.

Cooperation between the two countries is broad and includes health, education, science and technology, energy, the environment, defence, police, arts and culture, and sports and recreation.

There is a healthy flow of investment in both directions.

The UK is recognised as the foremost source of FDI into South Africa, while South African companies equally have made large investments in the UK.

South Africa and the UK have important trade and economic relations, which continue to strengthen, although the global economic crisis has had a significant impact on bilateral trade.

The UK is by far South Africa's most significant source of long-haul tourists, a position it has not relinquished for the past 15 years.

The 10th South Africa-UK Bilateral Forum met in September 2013 in Cape Town, co-chaired by Minister Nkoana-Mashabane and UK Foreign Secretary William Hague. The Bilateral Forum is a structured mechanism to monitor and manage bilateral relations between the two countries and meets every two years, co-chaired at Foreign Minister level.

During the 10th Bilateral Forum, the two countries have committed to strengthening bilateral relations further through the following:

- launched the South African-UK Business Council
- held a highly successful Youth Dialogue with youth representatives from the public and private sectors
- continued discussing immigration issues, including the visa issue
- acknowledged the long history of cooperation on development, guided by the National Development Plan (NDP) and its vision to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality
- expressed satisfaction at the effective defence relationship between the two countries and the high level of interaction and cooperation
- renewed science and technology cooperation and agreed to make it a key pillar in the bilateral relationship
- reported on new programmes for arts and culture cooperation
- reviewed regional and multilateral cooperation
- committed to work together to achieve regional and global development goals in support of Africa's future, including through the new South African Development Partnership Agency.

The UK announced in April 2013 that it would end its development cooperation programme in South Africa in 2015.

Ireland

The Republic of Ireland was the only EU member country that did not have full diplomatic relations

South Africa hosted the Asia-Middle East Investment Seminar in Cape Town in November 2013, with the aim of seeking investment from the regions. More than 100 representatives from Asian and Middle Eastern diplomatic corps attended the two-day seminar. South Africa hosted a series of trade and investment seminars in KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and North West to expose the economic opportunities in South Africa to its trade partners.

with South Africa until the dawn of democratic South Africa.

Ireland continues to be a valued source of FDI in the following sectors: business services, alternative/renewable energy, software and IT services, and plastics.

Through the previous and current Irish aid programmes, the Irish Government has been providing development assistance to South Africa, focusing on education and skills development thereby contributing to the promotion of South Africa's national priorities. The current programme has a budget of R39 million per year.

Relations with Europe

European Union (EU)

In July 2013, President Zuma and his delegation met with the EU delegation led by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, in Pretoria.

Given the challenges that face South Africa, President Zuma emphasised that the central theme of South Africa's engagements with Europe should be "Job Creation through Inward Investment."

This is also in response to the diverse demands of South Africa's NDP. The summit was used to highlight job creation initiatives that South Africa is implementing and to encourage the continuation of EU development cooperation in South Africa.

Since 1994, building on shared values and mutual interests, South Africa and the EU have developed a comprehensive partnership based on the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA).

The SA-EU relationship is guided by the principle that the EU should support South Africa's national, regional and African priorities and programmes to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment.

The EU is South Africa's main development assistance partner, amounting to €980 million for the period 2007 – 2013, with a further €900 million from the European Investment Bank for the same period.

A South African delegation, led by President Zuma, was in talks with representatives from the EU in July 2013, where ways to boost trade and investment were discussed. President Zuma welcomed the European Council President, Herman Van Rompuy, and EU Commission Head, José Manuel Barroso, for the sixth South Africa-EU Summit at the Sefako Mapogo Makgatho Presidential Guest House.

The summit was an opportunity to strengthen

strategic relations between the EU and South Africa, and to discuss a number of key issues, in particular the South Africa-EU strategic partnership, key peace and security topics in Africa and beyond, and also global governance, climate change, trade, development issues, and the relations between Africa and Europe as a whole, as set down in the joint Africa-EU strategy.

President Zuma also discussed the October 2014 deadline imposed by the EU for the conclusion of the economic partnership agreement (EPA) with the SADC countries. The EPA gives the countries preferential access for their agricultural and agro-processed products to EU markets.

Benelux countries

The Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) remain important trade and investment partners of South Africa, and major providers of tourism. The Netherlands is the second-most important source of FDI into South Africa.

There has been important trilateral cooperation with the Netherlands and Belgium in the past in support of peace and security in Africa, inter alia on capacity building in the Great Lakes Region. Such trilateral cooperation can be further expanded in the future.

There is a regular exchange of views between South Africa and Belgium, as well as with the Netherlands, on the issues and complicated processes necessary to find durable solutions to the conflicts in the region.

Belgium

Relations between South Africa and Belgium are strong and dynamic, covering a number of areas that are important to South Africa's national development objectives. Belgium is South Africa's 12th largest export destination globally and ranks sixth in the world in terms of FDI in South Africa, among other things focusing on mining, green energy, ports, logistics and agriculture.

Belgium has allocated substantial resources to South Africa in the form of ODA since 1994. This support has covered such areas as health, ports management and logistics, education, rural development and further education and training. The budget of the development cooperation programme, which will run up to 2016, is R66 million a year. The Belgian region of Flanders also has a long-standing development programme in South Africa, also with a budget of R66 million per year up to 2016.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane held a bilateral meeting with her Belgian counterpart, Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister, in June 2013 in Brussels. The meeting covered bilateral political and economic relations as well as the African Agenda, including the Great Lakes Region.

In October 2013, a high-level and very large Belgian economic mission of 333 participants, including 252 business leaders, arrived in South Africa hoping to boost trade, investment and other ties.

Didier Reynders, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, was the political head of the delegation, but several other federal Ministers and leaders of the Walloon and Flanders sub-national state governments were also participating. The overall mission was headed by Princess Astrid, representing her brother, the new King Philippe.

The Netherlands

Apart from being the second-most important source of FDI into South Africa, the Netherlands is South Africa's seventh-largest trading partner in the world. The Netherlands is the fourth most important source of long-haul tourists to South Africa, with 92 547 visitors in 2012. The Dutch Government has consistently supported South Africa in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations. A large number of bilateral agreements have been signed and high-level bilateral Ministerial meetings are held regularly.

Luxembourg

Bilateral and economic relations, especially in the financial services and funds sectors, remain strong between Luxembourg and South Africa.

German-speaking countries

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the German-speaking countries cover various issues, including investment and trade, science and technology, defence, culture, the environment, tourism, sport, development cooperation and energy, but also entail multilateral and trilateral engagements.

Germany

The South African-German Year of Science (2012–2013) displayed great strides in science and technology cooperation. Around 41 joint research projects were initiated, focusing on areas such as astronomy, renewable energy and pharmaceuticals.

The German Development Agency maintains a big and active presence in South Africa and also extends its capacity building and other development assistance programmes into the SADC region and the rest of Africa. Together with the Southern Africa-German Chamber of

Commerce in Johannesburg (the largest of its kind in South Africa) and the German business community, it makes a substantive contribution to vocational education and skills development for young South Africans.

The affluent German tourism market is the second-most important in Europe for South Africa and saw 266 333 Germans visiting South Africa in 2012.

Following the visit in May 2012 by Deputy President Motlanthe to co-chair the German-South African BNC, South Africa looks forward to hosting the next BNC in 2014.

South Africa and Germany signed an MoU in February 2013 to enhance bilateral dialogue and practical cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector by establishing a partnership, which builds on the ongoing successful cooperation in the energy sector.

The main objective of the energy partnership is to improve and develop a sustainable energy infrastructure, particularly through the increased use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

In April 2013, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle paid an official visit to South Africa, during which he recommitted Germany to strengthening economic relations further, with South Africa.

The German Minister for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Ilse Aigner, met with the South African Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in May 2013, for bilateral discussions.

Germany is a good partner in terms of offering South Africa technical assistance in agriculture. The meeting also culminated in the signing of a statement of intent regarding cooperation in the field of vocational training for the development of the agricultural economy and providing the population with safe food.

Switzerland

Relations between South Africa and Switzerland are based on equal partnership. There are some 200 Swiss companies in South Africa, employing around 36 000 South Africans.

Consultations at the level of deputy ministers of international relations and a Joint Economic Commission at the level of Ministers of trade occur annually.

Switzerland has granted South Africa special status on the Swiss foreign-policy agenda as one of the focus areas for Swiss interests outside Europe.

Switzerland actively contributes to numerous development assistance programmes in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa.

The dti hosted the South Africa-Switzerland business forum in September 2013, which

presented business opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

South Africa and Switzerland also signed an MoU on cooperation and trade promotion.

Switzerland remains South Africa's major trading and investment partner in the European Free Trade Association.

South Africa held high-level discussions with Switzerland when Deputy Minister Fransman was on an official visit in November 2013.

He co-chaired the fifth Annual Switzerland-South Africa high-level consultations (HLC) with his Swiss counterpart, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Yves Rossier.

The HLC, held in Fribourg, discussed ways and measures to enhance bilateral and economic relations in support of South Africa's national priorities.

The HLC consists of the Foreign Policy, Economic Development, Trade and Financial Issues, Development Cooperation, as well as the Science and Technology Working Group.

Since the establishment of the HLC, many bilateral engagements have taken place. These include the signing of the Scientific Cooperation Agreement, the establishment of the Joint Economic Committee and the Agreement on the Support for Energy Efficiency Monitoring and Implementation Project.

Austria

South Africa continues to enjoy cordial bilateral relations with Austria, focused primarily on economic exchanges. South Africa ranks sixth among Austria's overseas trading partners, and is by far Austria's major trading partner in Africa. Some 400 Austrian companies are currently engaged in trade relations with South African companies. More than 50 Austrian companies have direct investments in South Africa.

Tourism between Austria and South Africa has undergone an increase of 120% since the early nineties and between 2011 and 2012 alone these numbers increased from 21 841 to 25 179.

Nordic countries

South Africa enjoys good relations with all the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Flowing from the strong grassroots support in these countries for democratisation in South Africa, relations have been established in virtually every field at both public and official levels. The scope of Nordic development cooperation is broad and has benefited civil society and government.

Relations in the international arena have seen close cooperation on multilateral issues. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of Nepad and are directly involved in conflict resolution

and reconstruction projects in Africa. This was reinforced by the signing of the Declaration of Intent on Partnerships in Africa in June 2008, which laid a framework for future trilateral cooperation.

Denmark

Denmark was a very strong supporter of the anti-apartheid struggle and a major force in sanctions and disinvestment. In addition, Denmark has always had a very active development cooperation programme, which ended in 2013. The Danish Government is focusing on renewable energy development in South Africa. This programme has been developed in response to the commitments made in the MoU of October 2011 between Denmark and South Africa and to the Declaration of Intent on the South African Renewable Initiative (SARI) to which Denmark is a co-signatory.

The programme has been designed with the intention of assisting South Africa in implementing its policy of developing a low-carbon economy with special focus on electricity supply.

As part of the country's 2009 to 2013 programme, more than R7 billion is disbursed to projects ranging from water, energy, education, and governance, the South African Police Service, business support, and the fight against HIV and AIDS. In addition, Denmark remains a strong supporter of Nepad and African development.

Norway

Deputy Minister Fransman co-chaired the inaugural HLC with his Norwegian counterpart, State Secretary Bard Glad Pedersen in Oslo during his official visit in November 2013.

The structured HLC cover the areas of international relations and human rights, trade and investment, renewable energy, education and skills development, and science and technology.

Finland

In June 2013, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation concluded a successful working visit to Finland, where she participated in the 13th Africa-Nordic Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held in the Finnish town of Hameenlinna. The meeting addressed three issues, namely, how macro economic challenges affect the Nordic Welfare model, Africa on the rise – how to make economic growth inclusive, and seeking solutions to African conflicts – the role of regional and global actors.

The annual gathering was a frank and open dialogue between African and Nordic like-minded states focusing on mutual cooperation in developmental matters.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane held bilateral talks with her Finnish counterpart, Erkki Tuomioja. The meeting focused on South Africa-Finland bilateral political and trade relations. The two Ministers also exchanged views on issues of common interest, including the reform of global governance institutions.

South Africa attaches great importance to its Nordic partners, and this visit provided a platform to further consolidate and strengthen the already cordial relations between South Africa and Finland. The meeting also served to deepen Africa-Nordic cooperation.

Sweden

In May 2013, ministers from South Africa and Sweden met in Pretoria to assess the state of relations between the two countries. The high-level meeting was attended by the ministers of International Relations and Cooperation, Trade and Industry, National Planning, and the Deputy Minister of Finance. The two sides also exchanged views on developments on the African continent and in the multilateral arena.

Sweden is one of the important investors in South Africa, with more than 100 companies creating around 30 000 jobs.

In October 2013, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe and the Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden Jan Björklund convened the eighth South Africa-Sweden BNC in Pretoria.

The eighth session assessed the state of relations between the two countries, particularly the implementation of the programme of bilateral cooperation. Sweden has a well-developed maritime sector and South Africa has established a Maritime Skills Development Programme with Sweden through the South African Maritime Safety Authority. Through the programme, 26 South African postgraduate students have been awarded scholarships to study at the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden.

Mediterranean Europe

France

France is a significant trade, investment, tourism and development cooperation partner for South Africa. About 250 French companies have invested in South Africa and employ around 300 000 people. In October 2013, French President François Hollande paid an official visit to South Africa.

South Africa will count on France's support in ensuring the effective implementation of the United Nations Resolution 2033, which provides for closer coordination between the Security Council and the AUPSC.

Italy

South Africa's relations with Italy are cordial. Between 2012 and 2013, South Africa undertook a number of high-level visits to Italy. Deputy President Motlanthe met with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti in Italy to review the scope of relations between the two countries and identify possible further areas of cooperation. The Deputy President addressed a business luncheon on South Africa's Infrastructure Development Programme and opportunities for investment.

Spain

By September 2013, Spanish companies had targeted the energy, financial services, tourism, textiles, information technology and software, metals, and mining sectors in South Africa for FDI.

In July 2013, the ninth Session of South Africa-Spain Annual Consultations was concluded in Pretoria.

The discussions were co-chaired by Deputy Minister Fransman and his counterpart, the Secretary of State Gonzala De Benito.

Greece

South Africa and Greece enjoy traditional and close ties of friendship and cooperation as well as a convergence of views and cooperation on various regional and international issues in general.

Bilateral relations between the two countries continue to grow in a number of strategic and mutually beneficial areas.

In November 2012, during the visit to South Africa by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, responsible for Greeks abroad and development, Konstantinos Tsiaras, an agreement on economic cooperation aid was signed.

Cyprus

South Africa has excellent and long-standing bilateral relations with Cyprus. It has maintained strong ties with Cyprus, partly because of the large and influential Cypriot community in South Africa, of about 60 000 people.

In 2011, the South African Embassy in Washington DC conceived the South Africa 2012 (SA 2012) Campaign, premised on the recognition of 2012 as a year which focused on South Africa, with events such as the African Diaspora Summit, as well as the Centenary Celebrations of the African National Congress.

The highlight of the SA 2012 campaign was the Celebration of the Life, Legacy and Values of Nelson Mandela.

The climax of the campaign was the unveiling of the Nelson Mandela statue in front of the newly renovated Embassy of South Africa on 3051 Massachusetts Avenue in Washington DC in September 2013.

In September 2012, Minister Nkoana-Mashabane paid a working visit to Cyprus at the invitation of their Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Erato Kozakou-Markoullis. During the visit, the MoU on Bilateral Political Consultations, and the Protocol to the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Fiscal Evasion were signed.

Portugal

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Portugal are cordial and cover many areas, underpinned by the High-level Political Consultative Forum, which provides a platform for the two countries to explore the deepening of relations across the spectrum of South Africa's national priorities, political cooperation, the strengthening of trade and investment and development cooperation.

In February 2013, Deputy Minister in the Presidency Obed Bapela visited Portugal.

Bilateral relations between both countries have not reached their full potential especially considering the historical and current political and cultural links between the two countries.

Eastern Europe

The Eastern Europe region is of crucial importance to South Africa's strategic objectives, straddling a wide spectrum of political and economic interests.

The region is well endowed with strategic commodities and minerals that are of vital significance to South Africa's economy.

Cooperation in gas and oil and the peaceful use of nuclear energy can go a long way towards alleviating South Africa's energy needs.

Poland

Polish-South African relations entered a new phase after the fall of apartheid. Poland is regarded as one of the countries in central Europe with great strategic importance to South Africa.

Poland is not only one of the strongest role players in the political and economic arenas in central Europe, but also an emerging power in the EU.

In October 2013, Deputy President Motlanthe, held discussions with visiting Polish Prime Minister Donald Franciszek Tusk in Pretoria.

Russian Federation

South Africa regards the Russian Federation as an important strategic partner and close bilateral and multilateral ties exist between the two countries.

With the dissolution of the USSR, South Africa became the first African state to recognise the independence of the Russian Federation. Full diplomatic relations were established between South Africa and the Russian Federation in February 1992.

In February 2013, Minister Nkoana-Mashabane hosted Minister Donskoy, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, in Pretoria during an Joint Inter-Governmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation co-chairpersons' meeting. The agreements under consideration are in the fields of agriculture, education, energy, fisheries, justice, mineral resources, science and technology, and transport.

South Africa and Belarus marked the beginning of an important relationship when the two countries established a working group to facilitate bilateral cooperation in agriculture. In March 2013, on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in South Africa, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Head of Presidential Affairs in Belarus Viktor Vladimirovich Sheiman discussed further cooperation in the field of agriculture between the two countries.

Belarus expressed its interest in deepening relations with South Africa when it drew attention to its potential in the agro-industrial and scientific sectors.

An MoU concerning the intent to discuss further cooperation in the field of agriculture between the two countries was signed.

